

Charlotte Ballet: Impact-Driven Donor Tiers



What Is It?

With the COVID-19 shutdown and no benefits left to give, the Resilience Fund (RF) was created as an emergency appeal to raise short-term revenue. Donation levels shifted from what *donors* receive to what *the organization* receives.

How Did They Do It?

- Wiped all other fundraising platforms from the website, making the RF **the only vehicle to give through**.
- Used the [Classy](#) platform to build the infrastructure — provides effective branding/design and **multiple giving time frame options** (i.e., monthly, quarterly, one-time).

Goals & What's Next?

- \$1 million goal: first \$500K raised by the board in 4 weeks.
- Designed tiers to be as **personal and compelling** as possible so that donors could easily relate to the ask.
- Began a new campaign in late April 2021 to ramp up for the ballet's 50th anniversary and reopening.

The Five Donor Tiers of the Resilience Fund

Tier descriptions are short, easy to read, and the design is simple.

- The first sentence describes how that tier's focus has been affected by the pandemic.
- The second sentence describes what that gift amount can provide — or the impact.

By using general language describing what your gift "can" do [see highlighted text], Charlotte Ballet was able to **keep donations unrestricted** while still being able to focus on specific impacts.

The tiers showcase **various aspects of the organization** and offer **different impact types**. This increases the ballet's success in engaging with a donor pool that has a wide variety of interests and motives.



Reach Attire \$100

Our Reach program, typically held in community centers around Charlotte, is now fully virtual. A gift of \$100 **can help** provide attire for class including leotards, tights, and shoes for 5 students.

DONATE

Item-Based Impact



Academy Scholarships \$250

The Academy has had to significantly reduce its scholarship and financial aid support to students this year. A gift of \$250 helps assist one month of tuition for a student who would otherwise not have the opportunity to dance.

DONATE

Time-Based Impact



Center for Dance cleaning procedures \$500

The Center for Dance reopened for Academy classes after being closed 6 months. To keep our dancers and staff safe, we increased our cleaning budget by 50%. A gift of \$500 **can fund** new safety and cleaning measures at our Center for Dance for one week, a necessary yet unexpected expense.

DONATE

Time-Based Impact



Supporting dedicated staff and artists \$1,000

A gift of \$1,000 **can help** us keep our dedicated staff who have worked to keep Charlotte Ballet running after our performances and classes shut down. It will also maintain our dancers' weeks of work while performances remain postponed.

DONATE

Person-to-Person Impact



Digital Programming \$2,500

Charlotte Ballet @home has allowed our artists to remain creative and our patrons to remain engaged. A gift of \$2,500 will provide materials and necessary staff to continue bringing digital experiences to our community.

DONATE

Item-Based + Person-to-Person Impact

Charlotte Ballet: Impact-Driven Donor Tiers



Takeaways from The Resilience Fund (RF)

1 Frame tiers around impact for a comprehensive fundraising appeal

What this means. In the past, Charlotte Ballet's appeals often focused on one program or story at a time. The shift to an impact-driven donation structure made it easier to highlight the ballet's numerous programming efforts **in a single campaign effort**.

Why it works. Not only does framing around impact encourage altruistic giving but by having one cohesive platform, the ballet made the RF the only vehicle to give through, allowing staff to (1) **funnel all attention and resources** to this platform, and (2) **lower the risk of confusing donors** with other appeals.

2 Choose impacts that are timely and are actionable

What this means. The RF was built on a **"right here, and right now"** mindset, in which donor tiers reflected areas where immediate action could take place. Importantly, donors were sent pictures and messages showing the progress made with their donations.

Why it works. By making it a priority to **show donors how the ballet was staying resilient** rather than only messaging about resilience, this reinforced donor confidence that their gifts were being used responsibly.

3 Use a variety of impact types to resonate with more people

What this means. Donors are more encouraged to give (and give larger donations) when they know their donation's impact. Charlotte Ballet utilized **three high-level ways** that a donor's gift could provide impact: (1) providing a tangible item, (2) funding an activity for an X amount of time, and (3) giving to someone in need.

Why it works. This variety in impact type not only **increases the appeal to a heterogenous donor pool** but also **makes each donation tier its own unique unit** that doesn't rely on the other giving levels.

Integrating Impact into Donation Levels: A Spectrum

Partial Integration of Impact

Full Integration of Impact

Donor tiers are primarily incentivized by *benefits*, but impact is mentioned to some degree.

Donor tiers are built around *impact* – benefits may or may not exist.

Multiple gift designation choices within a fund – not tied to donor tiers

Overview of overall donation impact – not tied to donor tiers

Small mention of impact attached to each tier

Tiers are framed around impact – benefits are offered but secondary

Tiers are completely named and created around gift impact. Additionally, *no benefits are offered*.



Donors can designate their gift to 4 different funds: The Artists Fund, Jack Thomas, Community Engagement, and the School.



Dedicated a webpage to describing why donors should support the Alley, touching on Houston-based artists, the city's economic health, and music education programs.



An impact statement is included within each donor tier's media selection. However, benefits are still at the forefront of each tier.



Donor levels are thematized and defined by "who" the level is for, "what" the patronage supports in that level, and "how" much the minimum annual contribution is for that level. Benefits are found after scrolling down.



In its Resilience Fund, the ballet defined donor tiers by the gift's impact. Scripting was both qualitative and quantitative in how the gift could support the ballet.



For Art Start's 30 For 30 Fund, donor tiers are framed around impact and quantify how your gift can support their students. All tiers are set up to be monthly donations.



The ballet's Crisis Stabilization Fund framed each donor tier around an impact. Tiers are named with singular action verbs to signify a contribution to something.



When making a monthly recurring gift, donors can designate their gift to General Support, Friends of the Adlers, or Other.



On the donation homepage, the Nashville Symphony highlights various themes behind what gifts support, using strong quantifiable successes to bolster each theme.



Every donor tier has a picture banner with a graphic of what that one-time gift can provide. Again, benefits are the main body of each tier's messaging.



To increase monthly donors, the opera created a group called the Visionaries where donor tiers highlight that gift's impact. Benefits are linked at the bottom of the page but tucked away.

Note: the above three examples are instances of campaigns v. the other examples are all annual funds. It is easier to implement altruistic schemes without offering benefits in a short-term campaign due to its inherent targeted nature rather than in a long-term annual fund.

Other Examples of Impact-Driven Donor Tiers

One Fund in 2021

CRISIS STABILIZATION fund

\$10,806,604
\$12,000,000

90% OF GOAL

DONATE NOW

Grow \$50

Cover the cost of a virtual dance class for a Chicago Public School classroom, a part of the current e-learning curriculum.

DONATE

Support \$100

Underwrite a pair of pointe shoes for a Joffrey Company Artist.

DONATE

Learn \$300

Cover the cost of an online Joffrey Academy of Dance class for our Children and Youth programs.

DONATE

Inspire \$500

Sponsor a class of students from Chicago Public Schools to attend a Nutcracker Student Matinee in December 2021.

DONATE

Impact \$1,500

Support a sensory-friendly performance for audiences of all ages, including resources for attendees and a meet and greet with Company Artists. *Joffrey Circle

DONATE

Honor \$2,500

Help honor our commitment to our dedicated, world-renowned faculty who are fast-adapting to leading virtual classes and workshops. *Joffrey Circle

DONATE

Sustain \$5,000

Help sustain the delivery of holistic benefits that support the health and well being of our Company Artists and Staff. *Joffrey Circle

DONATE

Campaign Activity

See who supports your cause and what they have to say about it!

ALL COMMENTS DONORS

- D** David Shaw donated \$25.75
We watched "Under the trees' voices" through the La Jolla Music Society and were deeply moved by that magnificent piece! A small token in honor of the composer, choreographer and dancers.
5 hours ago
- \$103.00 was donated anonymously**
I'm giving in response to the letter mailed about the Community Engagement programs. Thank you for exposing dance to school children in Chicago.
7 hours ago
- K** Kathleen Soso donated \$51.50
9 hours ago
- O** Offline Donations 4.12.21-4.30.21 donated \$16,296.00
10 hours ago
- K** Krystyna Kiel donated \$103.00
a day ago

Show more ▾

All contributions during the 2020-2021 season support the Joffrey's Crisis Stabilization Fund, an effort to recover \$12 million in lost revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A live tracker on the fund's homepage shows donors the progress.

Like Charlotte Ballet, Joffrey Ballet utilized the Classy platform to build out its crisis fund infrastructure. Donor tiers are named with singular action verbs that correlate to that tier's impact. While the top three tiers qualify the donor for the Joffrey Circle membership, the benefits are not listed out. Donors can also choose to make their gift one-time or monthly, made possible by the Classy software.

At the bottom of the fund's webpage shows campaign activity, which gives donors confidence and encouragement that they are part of a community of givers.

Other Examples of Impact-Driven Donor Tiers

thewashingtonballet
JULIE KENT, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Stronger Than Ever Fund

In dance and in life, every bit of support goes a long way. Here are just a few of the ways your donation will make an impact:

SUPPORT

\$100 – Ballet attire for a student in need.

GROW

\$300 – Digital Adult community class.

IMPACT

\$500 – Physical Therapy consultations for company dancers and students.

INSPIRE

\$1,000 – Partial scholarship for a student in training.

HONOR

\$2,500 – Virtual two-week DCPS school residency for low-income youth.

SUSTAIN

\$5,000 – Supporting Future Talent. Help honor our commitment to our dedicated, world-renowned faculty who are fast-adapting to leading virtual classes and workshops.

FUTURE

\$10,000 – Keep the Dancers Dancing. A gift in support of our company dancers – 32 talented ballet dancers, representing 15 unique nationalities, who live and work in our community – is the most significant way to help the company at this time.

Click [here](#) to make a gift of any amount to the Stronger Than Ever Fund. Or, make a monthly contribution to sustain our art form into the future.

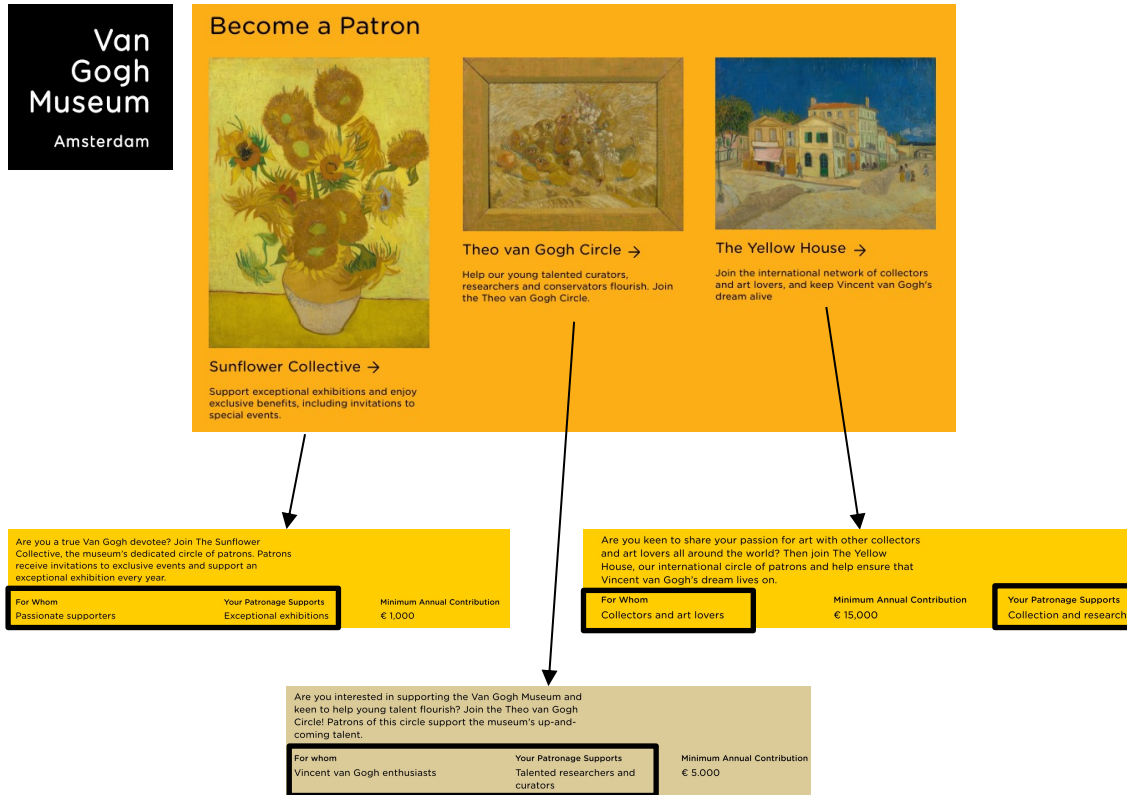
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, The Washington Ballet started its *Stronger Than Ever Fund* to triage the effects this shutdown would have on its bottom line. Tiers are completely driven by impacts and no benefits are offered. Funds will be used to support artist and staff salaries, supporting digital content, maintaining campus facilities, and paying for the essential needs in a new operating environment.



<p>30 Years</p> <p>For Art Start's 30th anniversary we are launching our 30 for 30 fundraising campaign in celebration! We'll be looking to gain 30 new Metronome members, our monthly giving program, at \$30/month.</p> <p>30 YEARS</p>	<p>Make an Outline</p> <p>Layout our plans with \$50/MONTH toward transportation passes and meals for Emerging Artists to attend networking and two-year planning sessions.</p> <p>JOIN THE OUTLINE</p>	<p>Express Yourself!</p> <p>Support one of our Emerging Artists bring their masterpiece to life. Giving \$100/MONTH allows one student in our Emerging Artists Program to be paid a stipend for their professional internship.</p> <p>JOIN EXPRESS YOURSELF</p>	<p>Be a Visionary</p> <p>\$250/month supports full year of Emerging Artist programming up to 3 days per week.</p> <p>JOIN THE VISIONARIES</p>
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To celebrate its 30th anniversary, Art Start created the 30 for 30 campaign with the primary intention of getting 30 new members into the Metronome cohort for \$30/month (Metronome is a collective of Art Start supporters who invest monthly in the organization). Donor tiers are framed around impact and quantify how your gift can support students without mentioning benefits.

Other Examples of Impact-Driven Donor Tiers



At a more permanent level, the Van Gogh Museum designed its annual fund donor tiers around themes, each defined by “who” the level is made for and “what” their patronage supports in that level [see black boxes]. This not only tangibly segments donors into their passions but makes the gift impact transparent. Benefits are fleshed out later in each donor tier but are not at the forefront of the messaging.



\$1,500
PROVIDES TICKETS FOR ONE CLASSROOM OF STUDENTS FOR A WEEKDAY MATINEE

Playwright's Circle
From \$1,500

Cost of Oliver Photo by Laura Turner.



Join the Artistic Director's Circle: Benefactor · \$2,500-4,999

\$2,500 allows 60 teens to see a show, meet one of the artists involved, and talk about it over dinner

Although donor tiers are not named and structured solely around impact, Arena Stage and Berkeley Repertory Theatre still make a notion towards impact within each donor tier, either as a call-out graphic or a simple statement underneath the dollar amount. Benefits are still the main messaging within each tier.